area under coconut" to the farmers for a minimum of 0.1 ha. and a maximum of 4 ha. in 3 instalments for first three years of planting.

Increase in the Production of Raw Cashew Nut

1865. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the necessity to increase raw cashew nut production in the country;

(b) whether Government have any programme to extend cashew cultivation in the coutnry; and

(c) if so, the details of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Government of India under a centrally sponsored scheme on 'Integrated Development Programme of Cashew' is providing assistance for area expansion, replanting , improving productivity of existing plantation, multiplication and supply of quality planting matrial, adoption of improved production and pest management practices and training of farmers to increase the production of cashew in the country. The current year's outlay of the scheme is Rs. 16.00 crores.

Rural Credit for Indian Agriculture

1866. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount of rural credit required by the Indian agriculture and how this need is going to be fulfilled during the Ninth Plan; and

(b) what strategies are being formulated and what is the response to these strategies by the banking sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) Rural credit required by the Indian agriculture as assessed by the Working Group on Agriculture Credit and coop. is of the order of Rs. 229750 crore for the IX Plan period. For meeting the agricultural credit requirements during the Ninth plan period, various steps have been taken to ensure that the Targets set forth for the Ninth Plan are fully met.

The Government policy is to restructure the cooperative credit system so as to double the flow of credit to agriculture and agro-industries, particularly to small and marginal farmers within next five years. To achive this objective, special Action Plans for strenthening the credit institution have been formulated. In order to augment the flow of credit to agriculture, it is proposed to increase the share capital of NABARD to Rs. 1000 crore from Rs. 500 crore and to set up State Agricultural Finance Development Corporations to provide credit support needed for hi-tech agricultural activities. As a part of restructuring package, equity support to the extent of Rs. 274 crore has been provided to 102 Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). NABARD has earmarked a sum of Rs. 400 crore for provision of refinance through a separate line of Short Term (SAO) credit to State Coorperative Banks (SCBs) and RRBs for meeting credit needs of tribals. Further RBI has advised to all commercial banks to increase the credit flow by 25% p.a. Cooperatives/RRBs have been advised to attain the same growth rate in the flow of ground level credit. RBI has relaxed its SLR/CRR norms to provide substantial resources to commercial banks for lending. Additional steps taken to improve credit flow to agriculture include simplification of application forms; prescription of scales of finance for Crop loans as worked out by the technical committees constituted in each district for various crops and their uniform adoption